

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi

No. ECI/PN/22/2003/MCPS

Dated: October 6, 2003

PRESS NOTE

Subject: Schedule for General Election to the Legislative Assemblies of Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, NCT of Delhi and Rajasthan and bye-elections to fill casual vacancies in State Legislative Assemblies

The terms of the Legislative Assemblies of Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, NCT of Delhi and Rajasthan are due to expire as follows:-

State	Term of House up to
Mizoram	7 th December, 2003
NCT of Delhi	13 th December, 2003
Rajasthan	3 rd January, 2004
Chattisgarh	31 st January, 2004
Madhya Pradesh	31 st January, 2004

2. By virtue of its powers, duties and functions under Article 324 read with Articles 172 (1) and 174(1) of the Constitution of India and section 15 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the Election Commission is under a constitutional mandate to hold elections on time to constitute the new Legislative Assemblies in these states.

3. Schedule for these elections has been framed keeping in view the festivals falling between now and end of the year as well as the constitutional requirement to have a new assembly in each of the five states on or before the

term of the houses expire. The schedule is also in keeping with the Commission's consistent policy to club different state elections together even when their term ends on different dates separated by a few months.

4. The Commission after taking all factors into consideration has decided to recommend to the Governors of the five above-mentioned states to issue notifications under the relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 calling upon the State Legislative Assembly Constituencies to elect members to the concerned State Legislatures as per the following schedule:

SCHEDULE FOR ELECTIONS

		Schedule for Mizoram	Schedule for Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, NCT of Delhi and Rajasthan
1.	Issue of Notifications	27.10.2003 (Monday)	7.11.2003 (Friday)
2.	Last date for making Nominations	3.11.2003 (Monday)	14.11.2003 (Friday)
3.	Scrutiny of Nominations	4.11.2003 (Tuesday)	15.11.2003 (Saturday)
4.	Last date for the withdrawal of candidatures	6.11.2003 (Thursday)	17.11.2003 (Monday)
5.	Date of Poll	20.11.2003 (Thursday)	1.12.2003 (Monday)
6.	Counting of votes	2.12.2003 (Tuesday)	4.12.2003 (Thursday)
7.	Date before which the election shall be completed	9.12.2003 (Monday)	11.12.2003 (Thursday)

BYE ELECTIONS

VACANCIES IN STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES

Name of State	No. and name of Constituency.	Cause of vacancy
1	2	3
Bihar	67- Sitamarhi	Death of Shri Hari Shankar Prasad
	204- Fatwa (SC)	Election of Shri Dinesh Singh set aside by the Supreme Court vide order dated 19.08.2003
	236- Barachatti (SC)	Death of Smt. Bhagwati Devi
Uttar Pradesh	132- Mahsi	Death of Shri Ali Bahadur
	401- Harora (SC)	Resignation of Km. Mayawati

5. It has been a clear and consistent policy of the Commission that bye elections shall be held at the earliest possible opportunity in order to ensure that no segment of the Indian people is left unrepresented for any unnecessary length of time.

6. The above are clear vacancies which are not subject to any election petition or appeal pending in any court and the remaining tenure of the concerned Assembly is more than one year. The schedule for these bye elections shall be the same as the schedule for Mizoram as indicated at para 4 above.

RECENT MEASURES

7. The Commission has consistently taken steps to ensure free and fair elections and to achieve this objective introduced a number of measures both preceding the announcement of and during the conduct of elections.

(i) Improvement in Electoral Rolls

8. An important initiative has been the effort to have clean and accurate electoral rolls based on which electors exercise their franchise. In a span of two years i.e. 2002 to 2003 the Commission has intensively revised the rolls in 27 States/UTs. The intensive revision of electoral rolls in Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, A&N Islands, Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, NCT of Delhi, Lakshadweep, Pondicherry were done in 2002 and in Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkand, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh these were done in 2003. Door-to-door survey of electors was undertaken in this exercise. In the remaining 8 states i.e. 7 North-Eastern states and Jammu & Kashmir summary revision was done in 2002 and 2003. As part of the exercise, two copies each of the electoral rolls are given after the draft publication and after the final publication to all the recognized political parties for their use and, importantly, to get feed back on the quality of the rolls.

9. A number of complaints were received from the states, particularly Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh, questioning the fidelity of the electoral rolls prepared and many political parties and citizen's groups expressed reservations on the veracity of entries made during the process of revision of rolls. Taking serious note of the lapses pointed out the Commission took prompt action to rectify and correct the discrepancies brought forth. In both Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh action was taken immediately after receipt of complaints to rectify the errors and only after satisfying itself of the quality of the exercise the rolls were finally published

by end June this year. In Delhi, action for scrutiny of rolls was taken up by deputing teams from the Commission to different assembly constituencies from where complaints emerged. In August-September Special Observers drawn from senior IAS officers of the Central government were drafted to assist the Commission in supervising the scrutiny of electoral rolls and EPIC programme in Delhi.

10. Over and above these administrative measures, and with the aim of enhancing citizen involvement in the verification process, the Commission for the first time took the initiative to disseminate and publicize the electoral rolls amongst the citizens at the local level. Copies of the electoral rolls were made available well in advance to local bodies to verify the entries through active participation of the citizens. The Chief Electoral Officers of the five states have held meetings in Gram sabhas and Ward sabhas in rural areas and in RWAs and other fora in urban areas where names of electors residing in those areas were read out and inclusions, deletions and corrections carried out in the electoral rolls based on local verification after following due procedure laid down in the rules. Consequent to this exercise, the Registration Officers are taking necessary steps to correct the rolls.

(ii) Affidavits by candidates

11. The Commission has already brought into effect on 27th March, 2003 the directions of the Supreme Court on affidavits to be filed by all candidates along with their nomination papers. The affidavit includes information on the criminal antecedents of the candidate, the moveable and immoveable properties of the candidate, his/her spouse and dependents, the liabilities of the candidate and his/her educational qualifications. The filing of the affidavit is mandatory.

12. As part of the efforts of the Commission to disseminate the information contained in the affidavits to the citizens at the earliest, instructions have been issued to the Returning Officers to make available copies of the affidavits freely to the other candidates, general public, media etc. on the very day the nomination is filed by a candidate. Besides, District Election Officers have been instructed to compile the information of affidavits for all assembly segments falling in their district and make available the consolidated information for the district to any person desirous of obtaining such information on payment of copying charges.

13. The Commission appeals to the citizens and all interested parties to cooperate with the election authorities for the widest dissemination of this information as contemplated in law.

(iii) Proxy Voting

14. After the enactment of legislation on Proxy Voting for service voters belonging to the Armed Forces and members belonging to a Force to which provisions of the Army Act applies, the necessary rules have been notified. These service voters have been given the facility to opt to vote either through proxy or through postal ballot papers. The Commission has already issued detailed instructions to the Chief Electoral Officers and the Returning Officers to implement the same and this round of elections will be the first when proxy voting will come into effect.

COMPOSITION OF POLLING PARTIES

15. The Commission in the recent past had drafted a portion of the polling parties from outside the state in the Jammu & Kashmir elections and from outside the district in Gujarat. These were done keeping in view the special

circumstances in those two states. However, the Commission learnt from the experiences of the two states that a mixture of polling personnel from outside does lead to better booth management, removes grounds for complaints of local bias and builds confidence of the electors in the neutrality of the election machinery. Accordingly, it has been decided that in the states of Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan 50 percent of the Presiding Officers and 50 percent of the Polling officers in every district will be from outside the districts concerned. In Delhi, the Presiding Officers will be drawn from the officials of the Central Government. Detailed instructions are being issued to the Chief Electoral Officers outlining the modalities for enforcing this decision.

ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES

16. The Commission has decided to use EVMs in all Assembly Constituencies in the five states and in the bye elections to be held for the above mentioned constituencies in the State Legislative Assemblies. A massive training and awareness programme has been launched. Adequate numbers of EVMs have been made available to the states and all steps have been taken to ensure that the poll is conducted smoothly on these machines.

IDENTIFICATION OF VOTERS

17. In consonance with the past practice, the Commission has decided that compulsory identification of voters will be made in the General Elections to the five State Legislative Assemblies and in the bye-elections to other Legislative Assemblies. In order to ensure that no voter is deprived of his/her franchise, if his/her name figures in the Electoral Rolls, separate instructions

are being issued to allow additional documents of identification of voters in each State.

MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

18. The Model Code of Conduct comes into immediate effect from today the 6th October, 2003. The Model Code of Conduct will apply to the States of Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, NCT of Delhi and Rajasthan and the whole of the district in which the whole or part of any Assembly Constituency going for Bye-election is included. This will be applicable to all Political Parties and to the State and Union Governments.

(SHANGARA RAM)
SECRETARY

STATE ELECTIONS – 2003 (II)

FACT SHEET

1. RAJASTHAN

(i)	Number of Assembly Constituencies		: 200
(ii)	Number of Electors: (after final publication)	Male Female Ser. Voters Total	: 1,77,28,635 : 1,61,16,846 : 56,504 : 3,39,01,985
(iii)	Percentage of EPIC issued		: 77%
(iv)	Number of Polling Stations		: 35,689
(v)	Number of EVMs with the State		: 50,050

2. MADHYA PRADESH

(i)	Number of Assembly Constituencies		: 230
(ii)	Number of Electors: (after final publication)	Male Female Ser. Voters Total	: 1,97,33,756 : 1,80,19,930 : 13,609 : 3,77,67,295
(iii)	Percentage of EPIC issued		: 58.35%
(iv)	Number of Polling Stations		: 41,436
(v)	Number of EVMs with the State		: 49,240

3. CHHATTISGARH

(i)	Number of Assembly Constituencies		: 90
(ii)	Number of Electors: (after final publication)	Male Female Ser. Voters Total	: 67,89,782 : 67,29,914 : 3,033 : 1,35,22,729
(iii)	Percentage of EPIC issued		: 54% (approx.)
(iv)	Number of Polling Stations		: 15,732
(v)	Number of EVMs with the State:	Available Being Supplied Total	= 18,000 = 1,000 = 19,000

4. NCT OF DELHI

(i)	Number of Assembly Constituencies		: 70
(ii)	Number of Electors: (after final publication)	Male Female Total	: 46,31,422 : 36,27,703 : 82,59,125
(iii)	Percentage of EPIC issued		: 71.81% (approx.)
(iv)	Number of Polling Stations		: 8,666
(v)	Number of EVMs with the State		: 10,641

5. MIZORAM

(i)	Number of Assembly Constituencies		: 40
(ii)	Number of Electors: (after final publication)	Male Female Total	: 2,53,299 : 2,54,770 : 5,08,069
(iii)	Percentage of EPIC issued		: 80% (approx.)
(iv)	Number of Polling Stations		: 798
(v)	Number of EVMs with the State		: 1,500